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CONFIDENTIAL

INFORMATION

September 19, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: SOVIET Comment on Your Trip

There has been a good deal of Soviet public comment on your trip,
all of it quite favorable. attached
at Tab A, if you have not already seen it.

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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HS:mm

HS Sonnenfeldt

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Comments on Dr. Kissinger's Visit

Dr. Kissinger's visit to Moscow has drawn uniformly positive comment from the Soviets. Using the language of the 14 September joint announcement, one Soviet commentator described the talks as "sincere and constructive." The commentator also said that the USSR not only strives for an improvement in relations but believes that better relations are of "primary importance." Moscow radio quoted the chief editor of the journal *USA*, V. Berezhkov, as saying that the Kissinger visit shows that the gap between US and Soviet positions on a number of important matters has definitely grown smaller despite continuing differences over problems like Vietnam and the Middle East. As might be expected, most of the Soviet comment attributes recent successes in US-Soviet relations to Moscow's policy of peaceful coexistence and to US acceptance of this principle as a governing factor in relations.

While most of Moscow's talk about US-Soviet relations in recent weeks has focused on the new "realism" in US policy, there have been signs that some people in the Kremlin are uneasy over moves toward closer association with the US. This has been most manifest in Soviet discussions of SALT, but it has extended to other areas as well. An article in *Red Star* early this month, for example, seemed not only to question the policy of normalizing relations with the US, but suggested that Moscow's effort to improve ties was complicating and perhaps damaging Soviet interests elsewhere. The article cited the "unchangingly aggressive" nature of imperialism and contended that changes in state relations were leading to "complications" in foreign affairs. Perhaps with an eye to instructing current Kremlin leaders on how to deal with the US, the

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author of the article quoted one of Lenin's close associates, V. Chicherin, to the effect that Lenin knew how to find the boundary between "unparalleled flexibility" and "firmness" in relations with the West. The message here seemed to be that perhaps some people in the current leadership did not draw such a distinction. [REDACTED]

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